



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Reply to Dr. Mladen Ivanic, Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina**

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 21, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and welcome to Minister Ivanic to the Permanent Council and thanks you for your assessment of the situation and developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We very much concur with your positive evaluation of the work that has been done – and which continues to be done – by the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Human rights, democracy-building and regional military stabilization are currently – and should remain – critical parts of the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia. There is work that still remains to be done, which can be facilitated by the presence of international actors that command the respect of citizens, political parties and government entities and institutions. The High Representative is one; OSCE is another.

We therefore welcome your comments, Mr. Minister, that you believe an OSCE mission should remain in your country for some time to come. Bosnians of different ethnicities and religions have worked closely with the international community, including as members of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia, to rebuild their country. The investment the Bosnian people have made in their future must continue to be matched by international support. Nevertheless, the failure to cooperate in bringing to justice those that are charged with heinous crimes remains a serious concern that, if not promptly addressed, could call into question the Government's commitment to democracy and to human rights.

We are pleased that attention is being devoted to tracking down persons indicted for war crimes and for securing their voluntary surrender and transfer to The Hague. We urge that stepped up efforts be made in Bosnia, and throughout the region, to find Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic and render them to The Hague. The commitment to assist in bringing these two men, and all other persons indicted for war crimes, to justice is contained in the Dayton-Paris Accords and backed by numerous UN Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which are binding on all states.

We would urge that the minister use his influence within the Republika Srpska to support defense reform and full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY). There is no alternative if Bosnia is to continue making progress toward integration into the Euro-Atlantic community and to reap the benefits of cooperation with other organizations, such as NATO through the Partnership for Peace program, than to proceed and have these people brought to justice. We consider quite alarming the recent refusal of 500 Bosnian Serb army recruits at two separate swearing-in ceremonies to take the required oath of allegiance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Not only is cooperation with the ICTY a must, but so is progress toward defense and police reform. The OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina has contributed significantly toward these goals. They are critical components of reinforcing stable, transparent relations with Bosnia's neighbors and restoring confidence of citizens and foreign investors in rule of law throughout the country.

We particularly salute the work being done to reduce the levels of armaments in Bosnia and to control the export of small arms and light weapons. These are very responsible steps that showcase Bosnia's focus on the broader goal of promoting regional stability.

There is but one Bosnian state – period. Dayton recognizes the Republika Srpska as an entity within the federal state. Police and defense reforms must move forward. Those who choose to dedicate their lives to public service by joining the armed forces or the police must know that they will be expected to serve a united Bosnia, and all Bosnians, not just their local region or entity or only one ethnic group.

We commend the Bosnian Government for improving accountability for human rights abuses; yet we urge the Government to take steps to improve the independence of the judiciary, to uphold media and religious freedom and to ensure that the rights of minorities, including returnees, are protected.

Let me thank the minister again for being here with us this morning and say that we look forward to hearing from you Mr. Minister and your excellent representatives here in Vienna about further progress toward full cooperation with the international community on key matters, and about ways the OSCE can further assist Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people.

Thank you.